

COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
Rabbit Valley Working Group
December 2, 2002

Attendees:

Ken Currey	Kathy Click	Neal McKinstry
John Foster	Mike Click	John Potter
Bob Silbernagel	Jim Cooper	Eric Rechel
Gene Arnesen	Dave Dunsmoor	Jane Ross
Sue Benjamin	Dawn Folks	Lovell Sasser
Nadja Brozina	N. J. Fulmer	Paul Toft
Arleta Carr	Mel Lloyd	

Greetings and Introductions

John Potter opened the meeting expressing his view that the Working Group was very close to completing its work. John invited Jane Ross, Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) Planning Team Leader, to take the floor and further explain the reasons for tonight's meeting.

Developing goals and objectives for the group's recommendations to the Advisory Council are a necessary part of the process, and Jane explained that she felt that doing this now, at the end of the planning process, was more productive. This goals statement will add weight to the Resource Management Plan (RMP) being developed and will serve to guide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in its management of the CCNCA. The value derived from knowing and evaluating the experiences and benefits of visitors to the CCNCA is critical. These benefits enjoyed by individuals, families, groups, communities, economies, and the environment all combine to make for a successful RMP.

John asked for clarification on what the BLM wants from the group tonight, and Jane responded that justification, or the "why" part, for the group's major recommendations need to be established.

Working Group Discussions

Paul Toft asked for clarification on the map that was handed out, and Jane explained that the new markings indicate areas that are and are not conducive to vegetation restoration (see attached). This map was provided tonight per a request at the October meeting.

Paul stressed that the off-highway vehicle (OHV) community feels strongly that the road running under the Interstate, providing access to the northern portion of the area, needs to remain open, but other roads north of I-70 are not critical to OHV enjoyment in the area.

John asked for further explanation regarding the map, and Jim Cooper, BLM Transportation Planner, explained the characteristics of the different areas most conducive to vegetation restoration.

Jane asked the Working Group to list its proposed recommendations:

1. Trail system
2. Movement of Highway 6 & 50 fence
3. Rehabilitation/restoration of land
4. Utah Rims joint/coordinated management
5. Acquisition of in-holdings, Joufflas priority
6. Backcountry camping; dispersed, porta-potties and fire pans required, no wood cutting

Facility Requirements

1. Large area for RVs/events near the rocks
2. Camping area for horseback riders

Jane asked the group to recap its desired outcomes in acquiring the Joufflas property. With this acquisition, the group felt it would eliminate trespassing issues and provide for the development of a badly needed campground, along with a move forward in preserving the CCNCA as a whole. Discussions ensued regarding the positives and negatives of in-holdings existing within the CCNCA.

Jane also asked for a group summary and comments on her listed goals statement (see attached). “Maintain, *or improve*, the quality of the experience . . .” was suggested. Jim asked the group to consider recommending adaptive management, and Gene Arnesen, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner, urged the group to describe, or paint a picture, of how the group wants to see the area in the future.

N. J. Fulmer expressed concern with the number of trails impacting land health, and discussions ensued on smart trails, land health assessments, and land health restoration.

Jane returned the group discussions to broad goals and what the group wants to see in Rabbit Valley. Jane asked N. J. to transform her concerns with too many trails into a group recommendation for the Advisory Council and RMP.

Ken Currey cautioned the group that full-size 4-wheel drive vehicles are gradually losing their access rights to recreational areas throughout the valley, and closing additional trails to that user group is not necessarily the answer to land health.

Jane informed the group that BLM wildlife biologists view the area around the 6 & 50 Reservoir as the most critical area to consider closing because of the wildlife habitat the area provides. As discussed in previous meetings, converting dead-ends into loops is

recommended as part of the proposed smart trail system. Ken encouraged the group to plan for the future and the anticipated increased use.

Jane emphasized that the CCNCA Manager, Greg Gnesios, is adamant that the BLM must conserve and protect what now exists in this National *Conservation* Area (NCA), as conservation is its middle name. This group needs to provide BLM with a description for how it wants to see this area managed in the future.

Sue Benjamin expressed her concern with off-trail abuse and asked how the BLM plans to manage for this. Jim explained that constrained and designated trails would be required at these areas incurring abuse and potentially throughout the entire CCNCA. Since the majority of damage is done near trailheads, the emphasis will be in these areas initially. User education will be key, but the results will not be seen immediately. Dave Dunsmoor stated that increased regulations are pointless, if enforcement of those regulations is non-existent and expressed his desire to see the group provide for flexibility in the RMP to adapt for the changing world of recreation.

Gene encouraged the group to keep their recommendations broad to allow for flexibility. The more specific the planning criteria, the faster the plan will become obsolete.

Jane explained the anticipated planning process schedule for the next few months and encouraged the group to wrap up its desired goals and future conditions for the area at tonight's meeting. Jane asked the group to concentrate on the physical and social settings for Rabbit Valley.

Kathy Click asked that "multiple use" be included in the physical setting goal statement.

The group agreed that the social setting statement should encourage user camaraderie and etiquette through education. All agreed that courtesy and respect for other users, as well as setting realistic user expectations, are essential. Jane summarized that the social setting encompasses an educational information campaign, recognizes multiple use and encourages tolerance for other users. All agreed that educational programs encouraged through the various user clubs and BLM partnerships are important in achieving the desired social setting for Rabbit Valley. Peer pressure and education in the field, among same-type users, should be practiced as one way to educate.

Jim suggested that the Working Group consider recommending volunteer groups be formed, for promoting user etiquette, that would be comprised of the different user groups (mountain bikes, horseback riders, OHVs, etc.).

Gene recommended implementing Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) now and providing for future Working Group meetings to develop specific regulations at whatever time those LAC thresholds were reached.

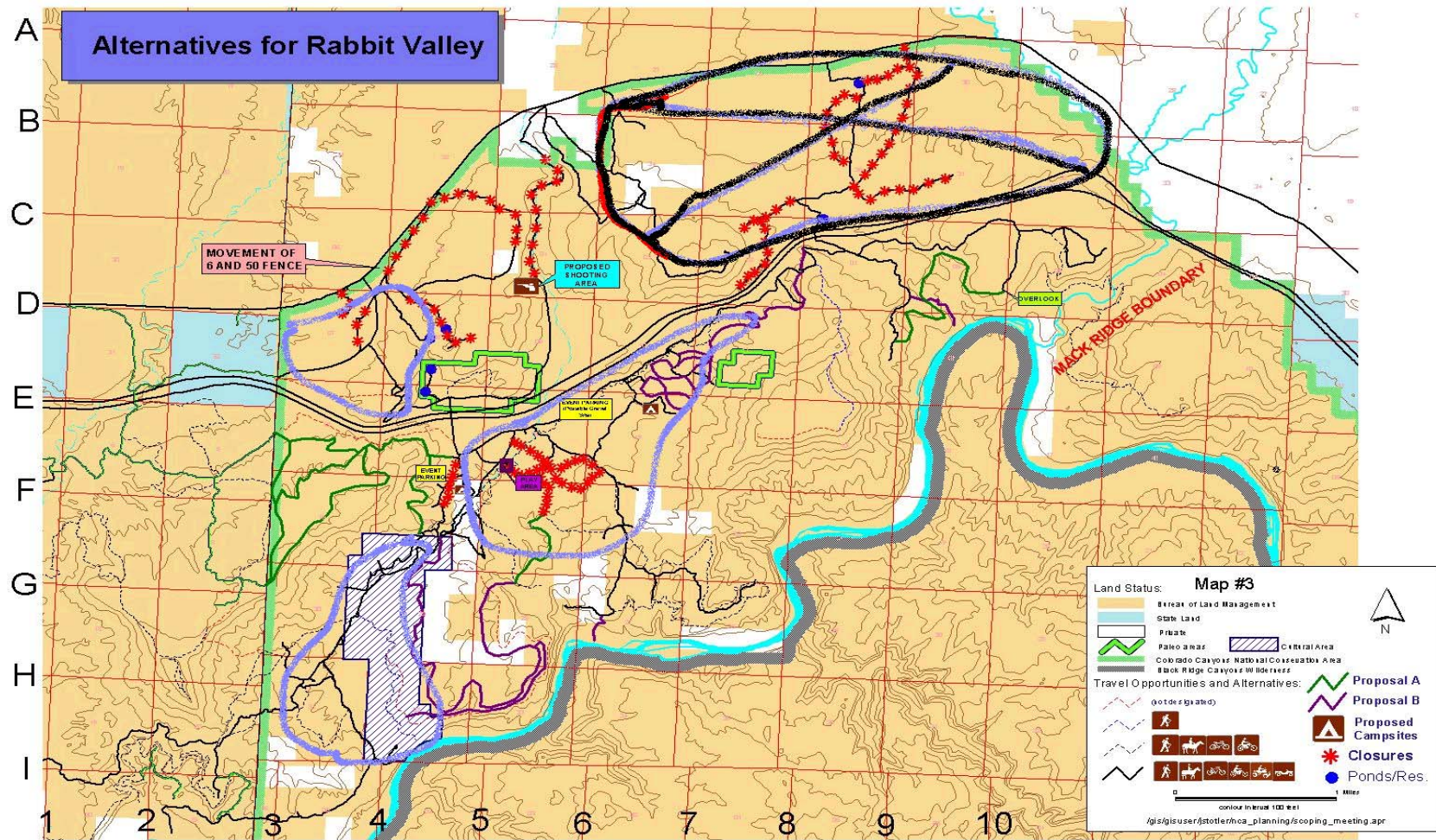
Eric Rechel asked that "maintain, *and where possible*, improve . . ." to the physical setting statement.

Paul urged the BLM to define and differentiate between backcountry and dispersed camping for management purposes.

Jane will develop tonight's discussions into a draft recommendations document for the group's review. The BLM will develop the administrative setting statement, and the alternatives will be developed and returned to the Working Groups for review. The draft RMP will be out next September/October, and all of the Working Groups will be asked to come back for comments shortly after that.

John adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA **Areas Suitable to Vegetation Restoration (violet marks)**



Note to Map User: No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregation with other data.

**RABBIT VALLEY
EXPERIENCES AND BENEFITS**

ACTIVITIES	EXPERIENCES	BENEFITS	B & E – '95	PROBLEMS
Motorcycling (Hiking / walking)	Savoring Area Canyon-Country Aesthetics	Improved physical fitness / better health maintenance	Get Away from Crowds of People	Too little visitor information about recreation (Same)
Mountain Biking (Mountain Biking)	Escaping Everyday Responsibilities	Restored mind from unwanted stress	Experience a sense of personal freedom	Use of 4WD/ATVs (Use of motorcycles)
Hiking/walking/running (Fossil viewing)	Releasing or reducing some built-up tensions	Enhanced sense of freedom in being able to get to this special place	Help you recover with everyday stresses	Use of motorcycles (Vandalized signs)
Sightseeing/driving (Horseback riding)	Enjoying easy access to diverse recreation environments	Increased quality of life	Do something challenging	Evidence of livestock grazing (Litter)
Camping (4WD/ATV)	Enjoying frequent exercise	Greater sense of overall wellness	Experience solitude	 (Use of 4WD/ATVs)
4WD/ATV (Camping Near Vehicle)	Feeling good about being independent and isolated	Greater cultivation of outdoor oriented lifestyle	Happier frame of mind	
Horseback riding (Motorcycling)	Enjoying exploration	Greater environmental awareness and sensitivity		
Fossil viewing (Nature Study)				
Photography (Viewing Indian rock Art)				
Camping Near Vehicle				

RABBIT VALLEY ZONE

GOALS: Maintain the Rabbit Valley area to allow for a wide range of multiple use activities in a manner that will promote land health, conserve natural resources, and provide enjoyment to current and future recreationists.

Maintain cultural and paleontological resources for scientific and educational research.

Motorcycling, mountain biking, hiking, sightseeing, camping, OHV use, horseback riding

Benefits	Experience	Activities
<p>Greater Sense of Overall Wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved physical fitness -Better Health Maintenance - Increased Quality of Life -Restored mind from unwanted stress 	<p>*Escaping Everyday Responsibilities</p> <p>*Releasing or reducing some built-up tensions</p> <p>*Enhanced sense of freedom in being able to get to this special place</p> <p>*Feeling good about being independent and isolated</p> <p>*Enjoying frequent exercise</p>	<p>Manage for visitors to have the opportunity to engage in multiple use activities including Off-Highway Vehicle use, mountain biking, running, hiking, horseback riding.</p>
<p>Greater Cultivation of outdoor oriented lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater environmental awareness and sensitivity 	<p>*Savoring Area Canyon-Country Aesthetics</p> <p>*Enjoying easy access to diverse recreation environments</p> <p>*Enjoying exploration</p>	

Physical Setting

Retain existing landscape to the greatest extent possible using modifications to trail system that will benefit all trail users and minimize impact to natural resources.

Implementation Actions

Trail Proposals:

Social Setting

Manage the area to:

Implementation Actions

Sign trails

Implement permit or reservation system to limit users when use necessary

Administrative Setting

(to be developed)